

IN THE CLAIMS:

CLAIM 1. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a hood for a hearing protector, comprising: injection molding of plastic material into a single contiguous piece employing plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect wherein said single contiguous piece includes at least two contiguous portions, the hood having an outer surface and an inner surface, said at least two contiguous portions being visible on said outer surface, and wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a central portion and another of said at least two contiguous portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 2. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the plastic materials are employed in both homogeneous and in porous or foamed form.

CLAIM 3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least two different plastic materials are employed.

CLAIM 4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3, wherein plastic materials of different densities are employed.

CLAIM 5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3, wherein plastic materials of different hardnesses are employed.

CLAIM 6. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3, wherein plastic materials with different modulus of elasticity are employed.

CLAIM 7. (Previously Presented) A hood for a hearing protector produced from plastic by injection molding, comprising:

at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface, said at least two contiguous portions being visible on said outer surface, a separation line separating said at least two contiguous portions, and wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a central portion and another of said at least two contiguous portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 8. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 9. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 10. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 11. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 12. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 13. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 7, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 14. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 7, wherein a portion is disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, is produced from a soft and elastic material, and is designed for sealing against an abutment ring which is disposed along the peripheral edge of the hood and designed to abut against a head of a wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included.

CLAIM 15. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 16. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 17. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 18. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 19. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 20. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 21. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 22. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 including an abutment ring attached to said hood.

CLAIM 23. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 24. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 25. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 26. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 7 wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 27. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 7 including an abutment ring attached to said hood.

CLAIM 28. (Previously Presented) A hood for a hearing protector comprising:
at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect; and
wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface, said at least two contiguous portions being visible on said outer surface, a separation line separating said at least two contiguous portions, and wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a central portion and another of said at least two contiguous portions at least partially surrounding said central portion.

CLAIM 29. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 30. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 31. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 32. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 33. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 34. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 28, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 35. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 28, wherein a portion is disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, is produced from a soft and elastic material, and is designed for sealing against an abutment ring which is disposed along the peripheral edge of the hood and designed to abut against a head of a wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included.

CLAIM 36. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 37. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 38. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 39. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 40. (Cancelled)

CLAIM 41. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 28 wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 42. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 28 including an abutment ring attached to said hood.

CLAIM 43. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a hood for a hearing protector, the hood having an outer surface and an inner surface, comprising:

injection molding a first plastic material to form a first portion;

injection molding a second plastic material to form a second portion, said first and second portions being mutually contiguous to each other to define a single contiguous hood, said first and second portions being separated by a separation line which is visible on said outer surface of said hood, said first portion comprising a central portion and said second portion at least partially surrounding said central portion, said first plastic material having different properties in at least one respect from said second plastic material and wherein one of said first or second plastic materials is softer relative to the other of said first or second plastic materials.

CLAIM 44. (Previously Presented) A hood for a hearing protector produced from plastic injection molding comprising:

a first portion formed from injection molding a first plastic material;

a second portion formed from injection molding a second plastic material;

said first and second portions being mutually contiguous to each other to define a single contiguous hood, said first and second portions being separated by a separation line which is visible on said outer surface of said hood, said first portion comprising a central portion and said second portion at least partially surrounding said central portion, said first plastic material having different properties in at least one respect from said second plastic material and wherein one of said first or second plastic materials is softer relative to the other of said first or second plastic materials.

CLAIM 45. (Previously Presented) A hood for a hearing protector comprising:

a first portion formed from a first plastic material;

a second portion formed from a second plastic material;

said first and second portions being mutually contiguous to each other to define a single contiguous hood, said first and second portions being separated by a separation line which is visible on said outer surface of said hood, said first portion comprising a central portion and said second portion at least partially surrounding said central portion, said first plastic material having different properties in at least one respect from said second plastic material and wherein one of said first or second plastic materials is softer relative to the other of said first or second plastic materials.

CLAIM 46. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a hearing protector comprising a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring being disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, the abutment ring intended to abut against the head of a wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included, wherein the hood is produced by a method, comprising:

injection molding of plastic material into a single contiguous piece employing plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 47. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the plastic materials are employed in both homogeneous and in porous or foamed form.

CLAIM 48. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 46, wherein at least two different plastic materials are employed.

CLAIM 49. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein plastic materials of different densities are employed.

CLAIM 50. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein plastic materials of different hardnesses are employed.

CLAIM 51. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein plastic materials with different modulus of elasticity are employed.

CLAIM 52. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 46 wherein the single contiguous piece includes at least two contiguous portions.

CLAIM 53. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 52 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 54. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 53 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 55. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 54 wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprise a central portion and another of said at least two contiguous portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 56. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 54 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 57. (Previously Presented) A hearing protector comprising a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring being disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, the abutment ring intended to abut against the head of a wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included, wherein the hood is produced from plastic by injection molding, comprising:

at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 58. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 57, wherein the portions include an outer and an inner layer of a first plastic material with a first group of properties and an intermediate layer located therebetween and comprising a second plastic material with a second group of properties.

CLAIM 59. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 58, wherein the outer and inner layers have a hardness greater than the intermediate layer.

CLAIM 60. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 59, wherein the intermediate layer has a hardness greater than the outer and inner layers.

CLAIM 61. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 57, wherein the portions include two material layers, of which at least one has surfaces which are free towards both an outside and an inside of the hood.

CLAIM 62. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 57, wherein the portions include two material layers which both have surfaces which are free towards an outside of the hood and surfaces which are free towards the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 63. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 57, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 64. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 57 wherein a contiguous portion disposed along said peripheral edge of the hood is produced from a soft and elastic material and is designed for sealing against said abutment ring.

CLAIM 65. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 59, wherein the intermediate layer has a foam structure.

CLAIM 66. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 60, wherein the outer and inner layers have a foam structure.

CLAIM 67. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 57 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 68. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 67 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 69. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 68 wherein one of said at least two portions comprise a central portion and another of said at least two portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 70. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 68 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 71. (Previously Presented) A hearing protector comprising a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring being disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, the abutment ring intended to abut against the head of a wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included, wherein the hood comprises:

at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 72. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 71, wherein the portions include an outer and an inner layer of a first plastic material with a first group of properties and an intermediate layer located therebetween and comprising a second plastic material with a second group of properties.

CLAIM 73. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 72, wherein the outer and inner layers have a hardness greater than the intermediate layer.

CLAIM 74. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 72, wherein the intermediate layer has a hardness greater than the outer and inner layers.

CLAIM 75. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 71, wherein the portions include two material layers, of which at least one has surfaces which are free towards both an outside and an inside of the hood.

CLAIM 76. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 71, wherein the portions include two material layers which both have surfaces which are free towards an outside of the hood and surfaces which are free towards the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 77. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 71, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 78. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in Claim 71, wherein a contiguous portion disposed along said peripheral edge of the hood is produced from a soft and elastic material and is designed for sealing against said abutment.

CLAIM 79. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 73, wherein the intermediate layer has a foam structure.

CLAIM 80. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 74, wherein the outer and inner layers have a foam structure.

CLAIM 81. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 71 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 82. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 81 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 83. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 82 wherein one of said portions comprise a central portion and another of said portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 84. (Previously Presented) The hearing protector as claimed in claim 82 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 85. (Previously Presented) A method of producing a hood intended for use with a hearing protector where the hearing protector comprises a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring intended to be disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, wherein the hood is produced by a method consisting essentially of injection molding of plastic material into a single contiguous piece employing plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 86. (Previously Presented)) The method as claimed in Claim 85, wherein the plastic materials are employed in both homogeneous and in porous or foamed form.

CLAIM 87. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 85, wherein at least two different plastic materials are employed.

CLAIM 88. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 87, wherein plastic materials of different densities are employed.

CLAIM 89. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 87, wherein plastic materials of different hardnesses are employed.

CLAIM 90. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 87, wherein plastic materials with different modulus of elasticity are employed.

CLAIM 91. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 85 wherein the single contiguous piece includes at least two contiguous portions.

CLAIM 92. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 91 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 93. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 92 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 94. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 93 wherein one of said at least two contiguous portions comprise a central portion and another of said at least two contiguous portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 95. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 93 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 96. (Previously Presented) A hood intended for use with a hearing protector, the hearing protector comprising a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring intended to be disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, wherein the hood is produced from plastic by injection molding, consisting essentially of:

at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 97. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 96, wherein the portions include an outer and an inner layer of a first plastic material with a first group of properties and an intermediate layer located therebetween and comprising a second plastic material with a second group of properties.

CLAIM 98. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 97, wherein the outer and inner layers have a hardness greater than the intermediate layer.

CLAIM 99. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 98, wherein the intermediate layer has a hardness greater than the outer and inner layers.

CLAIM 100. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 96, wherein the portions include two material layers, of which at least one has surfaces which are free towards both an outside and an inside of the hood.

CLAIM 101. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 96, wherein the portions include two material layers which both have surfaces which are free towards an outside of the hood and surfaces which are free towards the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 102. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 96, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 103. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 96 wherein a contiguous portion disposed along said peripheral edge of the hood is produced from a soft and elastic material and is designed for sealing against said abutment ring.

CLAIM 104. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 98, wherein the intermediate layer has a foam structure.

CLAIM 105. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 99, wherein the outer and inner layers have a foam structure.

CLAIM 106. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 96 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 107. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 106 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 108. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 107 wherein one of said at least two portions comprise a central portion and another of said at least two portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 109. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 107 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 110. (Previously Presented) A hood intended for use with a hearing protector, the hearing protector comprising a hood and an abutment ring, the abutment ring intended to be disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, wherein the hood consists essentially of:

at least two mutually contiguous portions which comprise plastic materials with different properties in at least one respect.

CLAIM 111. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 110, wherein the portions include an outer and an inner layer of a first plastic material with a first group of properties and an intermediate layer located therebetween and comprising a second plastic material with a second group of properties.

CLAIM 112. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 111, wherein the outer and inner layers have a hardness greater than the intermediate layer.

CLAIM 113. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in Claim 111, wherein the intermediate layer has a hardness greater than the outer and inner layers.

CLAIM 114. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 110, wherein the portions include two material layers, of which at least one has surfaces which are free towards both an outside and an inside of the hood.

CLAIM 115. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 110, wherein the portions include two material layers which both have surfaces which are free towards an outside of the hood and surfaces which are free towards the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 116. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 110, wherein at least one portion comprises a different plastic material than another portion.

CLAIM 117. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in Claim 110, wherein a contiguous portion disposed along said peripheral edge of the hood is produced from a soft and elastic material and is designed for sealing against said abutment.

CLAIM 118. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 112, wherein the intermediate layer has a foam structure.

CLAIM 119. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 113, wherein the outer and inner layers have a foam structure.

CLAIM 120. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 110 wherein the hood has an outer surface and an inner surface and wherein said at least two contiguous portions are visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 121. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 120 wherein a separation line separates said at least two contiguous portions visible on said outer surface.

CLAIM 122. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 121 wherein one of said portions comprise a central portion and another of said portions at least partially surrounds said central portion.

CLAIM 123. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 121 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 124. (Newly Added) A method of producing a hood for a hearing protector, comprising:

injection molding the hood from plastic materials to form a single piece having at least two contiguous portions, the plastic materials adhering to one another during the inject molding process, the plastic materials having different properties in at least one respect so as to improve the sound suppression capability of the hood by sound wave interference at an interface between the at least two contiguous portions.

CLAIM 125. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 124 wherein the plastic materials are employed in both homogeneous and in porous or foamed form.

CLAIM 126. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 124 wherein at least two different plastic materials are employed.

CLAIM 127. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials of different densities are employed.

CLAIM 128. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials of different hardnesses are employed.

CLAIM 129. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials with different modulus of elasticity are employed.

CLAIM 123. (Previously Presented) The hood as claimed in claim 121 including two of said contiguous portions wherein one of said portions comprises a softer plastic than the other of said contiguous portions.

CLAIM 124. (Newly Added) A method of producing a hood for a hearing protector, comprising:

injection molding the hood from plastic materials to form a single piece having at least two contiguous portions, the plastic materials adhering to one another during the inject molding process, the plastic materials having different properties in at least one respect so as to improve the sound suppression capability of the hood by sound wave interference at an interface between the at least two contiguous portions.

CLAIM 125. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 124 wherein the plastic materials are employed in both homogeneous and in porous or foamed form.

CLAIM 126. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 124 wherein at least two different plastic materials are employed.

CLAIM 127. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials of different densities are employed.

CLAIM 128. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials of different hardnesses are employed.

CLAIM 129. (Newly Added) The method as claimed in claim 126 wherein plastic materials with different modulus of elasticity are employed.

CLAIM 130. (Newly Added) A hood for a hearing protector, the hood being produced from plastic by injection molding, wherein the hood includes at least two mutually contiguous portions or layers which consist of plastic materials, the plastic materials adhering to one another during the injection molding cycle, with the plastic materials having different properties in at least one respect so as to improve the sound-suppression capability of the hood by sound wave interference at an interface between the contiguous portions or layers.

CLAIM 131. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 130 wherein the portions include an outer and an inner layer of a plastic material with a first group of properties and an intermediate layer located therebetween, the intermediate layer comprising a plastic material with a second group of properties.

CLAIM 132. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 131 wherein the outer and inner layers are relatively hard, while the intermediate layer is softer or has a foamed structure.

CLAIM 133. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 131 wherein the intermediate layer is relatively hard while the outer and inner layers are softer or have a foamed structure.

CLAIM 134. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 130 wherein the portions include two material layers, of which at least one has surfaces which are exposed to both the outside of the hood and to the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 135. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 130 wherein the portions include two material layers which both have surfaces which are exposed to the outside of the hood and surfaces which are exposed to the inside of the hood.

CLAIM 136. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 130 wherein at least one of the portions or layers comprised a different plastic material than the other portion or layers.

CLAIM 137. (Newly Added) The hood as claimed in claim 130 wherein a portion is disposed along the peripheral edge of the hood, wherein such portion is produced from a soft and elastic material and is intended to seal against an abutment ring which is disposed along a peripheral edge of the hood, the abutment ring intended to abut against the head of the wearer of the hearing protector in which the hood is included.